# US COUNTER-TERRORISM WAR 2003 AND THE OPERATIONS OF TERRORIST NETWORKS IN IRAQ

## Robert Chinonyerem Odoemene[1]* & Chikelue Ofuebe[2]

[1]Department of Political Science, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

[2]Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

*bobbyroby1@yahoo.com

**ABSTRACT:** This study is focused on US counter-terrorism war 2003 and its effects on the operations of terrorist networks in Iraq. It examined the invasion and forcible occupation of Iraq by the United States as a reaction to the September, 11 2001 attack on the United States. The objectives of the study included, to find out how the strategy adopted in the counter-terrorism war affected the operations of terrorist networks, especially al-Qaeda and ISIS, understanding what actually motivated the US invasion of Iraq when none of the 19 attackers of the 9/11 was an Iraqi citizen and to suggest how the negative effects of the war on terror can be ameliorated on the people of Iraq. The study adopted the securitization theory as a framework of analysis. Qualitative method of data collection and analysis was used to collect and analyze the secondary data. Part of the findings was that the US government technically securitized terrorism in order to use it as a cloak in furtherance of its imperialistic and commercial diplomacy in Iraq. Against this backdrop, the study came to the conclusion that though terrorism posed a global security challenge, the application of hard security (war) to stem terrorism was tantamount to using 'terrorism' to fight terrorism. Therefore it was recommended among others that the United States should review its counter-terrorism policy and adopt non-military measures rather than armed confrontations to counter international terrorism

**Keywords:** Terrorism, Counter-terrorism, Securitization, Al Qaeda, Organization

**Introduction**

Before the outbreak of the Gulf War I, 17th Jan. – 28th Feb. 1991, between the United States of America and Iraq, in which America forcibly occupied Iraq, Iraq was relatively a free and stable state, though, with a history of regional conflicts with its neighbours, but not that of armed **terrorism**. The nation had powerful leaders, among who were Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein had forced al-Bakr to resign in 1979, after a successful palace coup (Estes, 2011; Morgan, 2009).

President Hussein ruled 24 years in Iraq and provided a strong but somewhat dictatorial leadership. He achieved some degree of stability in government and a general belief in Arab solidarity. His regime encouraged massive economic development and high standard of living for the people of Iraq, using the nation's enormous oil wealth, even though it grappled with some internal opposition, mainly from the anti-government shiite parties and the Kurdish populated Northern part of the country (Livesey, 2005).

In obedience to Arab nationalism and anti-western policy of the Arab league, Hussein maintained a zero tolerance for western culture and civilization in Iraq. His ambition for a hegemonic control of the crude oil in the Persian Gulf and to be more powerful than his counterparts in the Arab world caused him to embark on a number of wars in the region. Iraq invaded Iran in 1980 in order to control the oil in the Iranian border region of Khuzestan, a territory inhabited largely by ethnic Arabs, over which Iraq sought to extend some forms of suzerainty (over-lordship). The Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988, after a cease-fire was brokered between the two countries by the United Nations (Estes, 2011), causing the Iraqi soldiers to return from Aqaba gulf.

But in 1990, two years after the Gulf war, Iraq, following a long standing territorial conflict and more so, over oil pricing and production dispute with Kuwait, moved to invade and annex Kuwait, a relatively smaller country, and a nation in which the US and UK had major economic interest, and declared it a province of Iraq.

The military expedition against Kuwait infuriated the UN, which condemned the occupation in very strong terms, and for that reason, imposed immediate economic sanctions against Iraq. The invasion of Kuwait damaged the international reputation of Iraq and portrayed the Hussein regime as a terrorist government. In a swift reaction to the carnage and wanton destruction of properties being carried out by the Iraqi soldiers, US and Britain moved into Kuwait to push out the invaders, and thereafter began a full military operation in Iraq.

In an address to a joint session of congress and the American people, President George W. Bush declared a 'war on terror'. He did so, of course, in the immediate aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, when the US and most of the world was reeling with shock and horror. That address still reverberates for more reasons than the famous declaration of war. It was here that President Bush both characterized the parties to the 'war' and set the parameters of the combat: (Gani & Mathew 2008, p.9),

> Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another and drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists … From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.

This address followed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack which was a series of coordinated terrorist attacks by nineteen members of al-Qaeda, against the United States. The attacks killed 2,996 people, injured over 6000 others and caused at least $10 billion in infrastructural and

property damage (Geltzer 2011). Four passenger jetliners all of which departed from airports in the North-eastern USA bound for San Francisco and Los Angeles were hijacked by nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists, though none was an Iraqi citizen. Two of the planes, flight 11 of the American Air lines and flight 175 of the United Air lines were crashed into the World Trade Centre complex, a third plane, American Airlines flight 77 was crashed into the Pentagon (the Headquarters of the US department of defence) in Virginia. The forth plane, United Airlines flight 93 was initially flown towards Washington DC but crashed into a field in Pennsylvania (Moore 2014).

Soon afterwards, President Bush deployed US forces to Saudi Arabia and urged other countries to send their own forces to the scene. An array of nations joined the coalition - the largest military alliance since World War II, to execute the ***Operation Desert Storm***. A great majority of the coalition's military forces were from the US, with Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and Egypt as leading contributors, in that order. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia also paid around US$32 billion of the US$60 billion cost of prosecuting the war (Peters & Howard, 1995 p.3).

The second invasion of Iraq by the US coalition lasted between 20th March and 1st may, 2003 and signalled the start of the Iraqi crises, The US christened it ***Operation Iraqi Freedom***. That invasion took 21 days of major combat operations in which a combined force of troops from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Poland invaded Iraq and deposed the regime of President Saddam Hussein (Peters & Howard, 1995).

According to President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, the coalition's mission was "to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people" (Hassan, 2012).

**Statement of the Problem**

Iraq as a state had basically been turned a primary theatre of war and terrorist activities since the beginning of the gulf war. So many terrorist organizations had sprung up in the country. Notable examples of such jihadist or Islamist networks include al Qaeda, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or Islamic State of Syria (ISIS), Al-Nusrah Front, Ansar Al-Sharia, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis, Jemaah Islamiya, Jaish-E-Mohammed (JEM), among others (Ugwulebo, 2017).

Al-Qaeda had mounted attacks on civilian and military targets in various parts of Iraq. It carried out the April 2010 Baghdad bombings - a series of bomb attacks in Baghdad, capital of Iraq that killed no fewer than 85 people over two days. Another deadly attack occurred on, 10 May, 2010. This was a serial  bomb and shooting attacks that killed over 100 people and injuring 350, the highest death toll for a single day in Iraq in 2010 (BBC News, May 10, 2010). Similarly, on 2 November, 2010, Baghdad witnessed a series of bomb attacks that killed more than 110 people. Still in the same year, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) took responsibility for a plot, U.S. and British authorities believed AQAP and specifically Anwar al-Awlaki were behind the bombing attempts. There were attacks in Iraq, in Jan, 2011. The attacks were a series of three consecutive suicide bombings which left at least 133 dead.

Al-Qaeda had allegedly committed international terrorist acts, including the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya, the September 11, 2001 attacks on US, and the 2002 Bali bombings in Indonesia, among others. The 9/11 attacks were coordinated by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists, 15 of whom came from Saudi Arabia, 2, from United Arab Emirates, 2 from Egypt and 1, a citizen of Lebanon (Moghadam, 2008).

Furthermore, the forcible closures of money transfer offices in countries suspected by the U.S. to have had links with al-Qaeda, in a bid to cut off money supply to the terrorist organization, greatly affected common people in those countries. In Iraq, the US shut down financial institutions believed to be assisting al-Qaeda in moving money and thereby creating difficulty to genuine customers in that country (Horst & Van Hear, 2002). More unfortunately too, criminal elements in Iraq hijacked the conflict, resulting in mass killings of civilian populace and rendering of millions others homeless, majority of whom up till date, live as asylums in different parts of the world.

Poverty, unemployment and a battered economy had since the war, become a telling comment, as property worth billions of dollars had been destroyed, creating the worst kind of joblessness in Iraq. Against this background, the following pertinent questions have been put forward in this study:

1) How does the US war on terror affect the operations of terrorist networks (al-Qaeda and the Islamic state etc) in Iraq?
2) What actually galvanized US invasion of Iraq when none of the 19 attackers of 9/11was an Iraqi citizen?
3) How can the negative effects of the war on terror - the killings, destructions, disease, hunger and total breakdown of law on the people of Iraq be ameliorated?

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to assess the effects of the US counter-terrorism on the operations of terrorist networks in Iraq. Other specific objectives include:

1) To find out how the strategy adopted in the counter-terrorism war affected the operations of terrorist networks, especially al-Qaeda and ISIS.
2) To ascertain what actually motivated the US invasion of Iraq when none of the 19 attackers of the 9/11 terrorist act was an Iraqi citizen.
3) To suggest how the negative effects of the war on terror can be ameliorated on the people of Iraq.

**Conceptual Clarification and Literature Review**

**Terrorism and Terrorist Network**

The idea of terrorism is not new, and even though it has been used since the early times of recorded history, it can be relatively hard to define the concept. Terrorism has been described

variously as both a tactic and strategy; a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination (Schmid, 2010 p.39). Obviously, a lot depends on whose point of view is being represented. Terrorism has often been an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. As an asymmetric form of conflict, it confers coercive power with many of the advantages of military force at a fraction of the cost (Conte, 2010).

The term, "Terrorism" is derived from the French word *Terrorisme*, and originally referred specifically to state terrorism as practiced by the French government during the 1793–1794 Reign of Terror. The French word *terrorisme* in turn derives from the Latin verb *terrere* meaning "to frighten." The Jacobins, coming to power in France in 1792, were said to have initiated the "Reign of Terror" (French: *La Terreur*). After the Jacobins lost power, the word "terrorist" became a term of abuse (Geoffrey, 2001), and it was used for very grievous offences especially those against humanity.

Due to the secretive nature and small size of terrorist organizations, they often offer opponents no clear organization to defend against or to deter. Terrorism is frequently cited by world leaders as the greatest threat to western democracies (Young, 2006). The intensification of terrorist activity in the past few years has made terrorism one of today's most pressing problems (Young, 2006). Understanding, explaining and studying terrorist phenomenon and the danger it represents about contemporaneous societies and democracy is one of the greatest favours that man can do to human society affirming the highest status of values (Selmani, 2005).

In the United States of America, for example, terrorism is defined in title 22 chapter 38 U.S. Code § 2656f as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents." According to Matusitz (2013), terrorism includes the following:

- It is the use of violence or threat of violence in the pursuit of political, religious, ideological or social objectives.
- It can be committed by governments, non-state actors, or undercover personnel serving on the behalf of their respective governments.
- It reaches more than the immediate target victims and is also directed at targets consisting of a larger spectrum of society.
- It is both mala prohibita (i.e., crime that is made illegal by legislation) and mala in se (i.e., crime that is inherently immoral or wrong).

Khan (1987), believes that terrorism sprouted from the existence of aggrieved groups. For him, these aggrieved groups share two essential characteristics: a specific political objective, and a belief that violence is an inevitable means to achieve their political ends. The political dimension of terrorist violence is the key factor that distinguishes it from other crimes.

In the United States, criminal prosecution of terrorists is a critical, if not the dominant method of fighting terrorism. The effectiveness and fairness of this approach depends largely on whether there is a clear definition of terrorism in the applicable laws (Young, 2006, p.1).

That is to say that "terrorist" is a *characterization*. Its meaning depends on the context and intention in which it is used, (something crystallized by the line – often quoted but never reliably attributed – "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter").

**Al-Qaeda**

Although the Middle East is not the birth place of terrorism, it has acquired a notorious representation in recent times as the most volatile region in the world and a safe haven for clandestine terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda (AQ), Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (also known as) Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Haqani, Hamas and Hezbollah among others, and their off-shore affiliates operating locally in some African countries such as Boko Haram in Nigerian, Al-Shabab in Somalia and Kenya and the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt (Kerr, 2016). The Middle East and North Africa have remained a primary theatre for terrorist activity even before 2001. However, since the formation of ISIL following the war in Iraq, the terror organization has continued to occupy large areas of Iraq and Syria while its branches – particularly those in Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen – persisted in fomenting sectarian strife and conducting attacks in those areas (Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015). This is done amidst the fragile political and security climate across the region (Mecalla, 2006).

Kerr (2016) observed that al-Qaeda and its affiliates had continued to seek and take advantage of opportunities to conduct attacks in the Middle East, including in Yemen, Syria, and in North Africa. When the U.S. occupation of Iraq began in 2003, foreign jihadists flocked into Iraq, thereby making it a new centre of jihad – and in the process, they transformed the nature of the anti-U.S. - Iraqi resistance.

AQ, one of the most dreaded terrorist organizations in the world today, was formed by Osama Bin Laden (1957 – 2001), with another Islamic militant, Dr Ayman Al-zawahiri (b. 1951). Bin Laden was radicalized when he was in his mid tens and became extremely devout, eschewing television, music and western clothes (Kerr, 2016). He was particularly angered by the Israeli – Palestinian situation, dreamt of a *Jihad* (Holy war) and became a member of a local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in his Saudi home country. He studied economics at the university but most of his time was spent with likeminded radicals, both students and teachers. After dropping out from the university, he went into his father's company and was later fired by his brothers, who disowned him because of his extremism.

When in 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and resistance there, became a matter of *Jihad*, Bin Laden heeded the call. He travelled to Pakistan and began fund raising for the Afghan *mujahedeen*, the guerrilla outfit that fought the Russians. He was well connected and one of his campaigns succeeded in raising $100 million. In the spring of 1988, Bin Laden and his friend, Al-Zawahiri came up with an idea of an international organization dedicated to *Jihad* to be called al-Qaeda (the base). As the civil war broke out in Afghanistan, following the Soviet withdrawal, bin laden fought with the *mujahedeen* and when he returned home in 1989, he was welcomed as a hero.

**Islamic State (ISIS)**

The self proclaimed caliphate, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (aka Greater Syria) was the name that Barak Obama used to describe the group (pretty much only Obama used it) was also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and later IS. It was an extremist militant group led by and consisting mainly of Sunni Arabs from Iraq and Syria. Its self-styled status as a caliphate allowed it to lay claim to religious, military and political authority over all the world's Muslims (Kerr, 2016).

ISIS was founded by the Jordanian militant Islamist, Abu Musab al-zarqawi (1966 – 2006) in 1999 and made a name for itself in the Iraqi insurgency for its suicide bomb attacks on Shia Mosques. In 2004, it pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, continuing its attacks on security forces, civilians, foreign diplomats and soldiers (Kerr, 2016). On June 7, 2006, al-Zarqawi was killed in a drone attack and was succeeded by the Egyptian radical, Abu Ayyub al- Masri (1968 – 2010). In 2010, al-Masri was killed alongside another senior organization figure, Abu Omar Baghdadi (? – 2010), by US forces. At that time, it was reported by a US general that around 80 percent of the IS' leaders in Iraq had been killed. An Iraqi, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (b.1971) – a man with a $10 million reward on his head – took over and remained the leader (Kerr, 2016).

**Theoretical Framework of Analysis (Securitization Theory)**

This study was guided by the **securitization or state-centric theory** of national security. Securitization originated from the Westphalia state system of 1648 (Lin, 2011). It was however, first applied as a theory by Ole Waever of the Copenhagen school in 1992. The theory had also been applied in the works of Lin, (2011), Fukuyama, (1992) Baylis, (2001) Calvani, (2008) Nwangwu, (2014; cf. Nnoli, 2006) among others. Securitization assisted in the explanation of the relationship between the counter-terrorism war and the activities of jihadist organizations designated by the United Nations as "terrorist", whose unpredictable actions had generated much concern to the world's populations.

The conceptualization of national security in this approach is state-centric and militaristic. To put it succinctly, the theory holds that the use of any means to prevent an attack and the ultimate protection of the territorial integrity of a state is the *raison d'état* of the state. Therefore, most states drew their national security plans, placing premium on high military build-up, diligence in matters of intelligence gathering and secrecy, and protection of resources and rights that were critical to the functioning of the state. The theory thus, conceptualized national security as a politico-military phenomenon (Nwangwu, 2014). It favours unbridled use of force (coercion) otherwise called 'hard security' in retaliation to any perceptive or manifest threat of attack on national security.

**Application of the Theory to the Study**

By applying Securitization theory to the study, it had been revealed that the US government and policy makers securitized terrorism which was a *political* issue by designating it an extreme security issue to be urgently dealt with, labelling Iraq the main source of terror, and as

dangerous, menacing and threatening, causing America to declare a war against Iraq in its bid to eliminate terrorism. Although the study agreed that the state has absolute responsibility for the protection of life and property of its citizens, it however argued that the war against terrorism was not only intended to guarantee national security and safety of citizens but also to further the hegemonic and imperialistic interests of the US in Iraq and the Middle East at large.

## Hypotheses

1) The US's invasion of Iraq increased rather than reduce the rate of terrorism in Iraq within the period under review.
2) Economic interests in Iraq, rather than extermination of terrorism informed US's invasion of Iraq.
3) Total withdrawal of America from Iraq with a genuine programme of reconciliation and amnesty is likely to ameliorate the negative effect of the war on the people of Iraq.

## Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The *secondary* variant of the qualitative method of data collection was employed because the study is a descriptive and qualitative one. The secondary documents consulted included books, media documents as Newspapers, Magazines; letters, diaries, public declarations, contemporary, general purpose Journals (Oguonu & Anugwom, 2014), and official websites of the Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) and those of ISIS and al-Qaeda, among others. The facts generated from the documents were valid and reliable as the materials had plausible and verifiable sources.

The data were analyzed qualitatively, using the logical interpretation/content analysis technique, which is applicable to the descriptive hypotheses earlier stated. That is to say, that the study was not designed for any statistical hypotheses testing (Unanka, 2008).

## Data Presentation and Analysis

## Escalation of Terrorism in Iraq

The following indices were used to measure the volume of terrorist acts committed in Iraq over the period under review; the number of violent/fatal bomb attacks, the rate of formation of terrorist organizations in Iraq within the period and the magnitude or level of destruction recorded in the country.

**Tables Showing List of Terrorist Attacks in Iraq 2010 – 2014. (Data curled from Wikipedia.Org).**

**2010**

| Location | Date | Description | Deaths | Injuries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Zummar | Jan. 27 | A suicide bomber tried to enter a police station in Zummar and was shot. His bomb west exploded and injured 3 Iraqi policemen and 1 US soldier | 1 | 4 |
| Karbala | Feb. 5 | Two suicide car bombers left 40 dead and 140 wounded when they detonated on a bridge across which pilgrims were making their way in and out of Karbala | 40 | 140 |

Table 3.1. Source: Wikipedia.org

**2011**

| Location | Date | Description | Deaths | Injuries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tikrit | Jan.18 | A suicide bomber killed hundreds of potential army volunteer recruits who were waiting to be interviewed outside a police recruitment center | 66 | 100+ |

Table 3.2. Source: Wikipedia.org

**2012**

| Location | Date | Description | Deaths | Injuries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baghdad | Dec. 17 | Two consecutive car bombings hit a residential area near city's General Hospital. The attacks were part of a country wide wave of violence that killed about 100 people in a single day | 100 | 45 |

Table 3.3. Source: Wikipedia.org

**2013**

| Location | Date | Description | Deaths | Injuries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basra | March, 17 | A car bomb in Basra killed 10 people | 10 | Unknown |

Table 3.4. Source: Wikipedia.org

**2014**

| Location | Date | Description | Deaths | Injuries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Al Anabar | Dec. 4 | ISIL militants executed 150 women, some of whom were pregnant at the time, who refused to marry their fighters | 150 | 0 |
| Madaen | Dec. 24 | A suicide bomber killed 33 people and wounded 55 others. Madaen is about 25kms (15 miles) south of Baghdad | 33 | 55 |

Table 3.5. Source: Wikipedia.org

This study contends that the counter-terrorism war, rather than reduce terrorism in Iraq, increased the scourge within the period under review. Iraq witnessed unmitigated bomb attacks, most of which were suicide bombings which resulted in the killing of hundreds of people in a single coordinated attack, in different parts of the country, though, attacks occurred mostly in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad than in other cities. Majority of the attacks were guided or controlled by IS rather than AQ. IS and AQ had tried to outwit each other by the number of attacks they carried out within Iraq, and the strategies adopted in carrying out such attacks. Comparably, IS, since inception in 2014, had shown superiority over AQ in perpetrating attacks against their common far enemy - the West. Between January 2010 and December 2014, AQ guided two international terrorist attacks while IS guided 18 attacks (Almohammad, 2019). When it started, IS, then ISIL or ISIS led operations to break the borders (seize and control) territories in Iraq and Syria and received pledges of allegiances from smaller jihadist groups operating outside of its controlled territories. It operated as a covert insurgent focused on guerrilla warfare, inciting sectarian tension and amplifying polarization, coercing, intimidating, and co-opting marginalized Sunni communities and exacting "revenge" attacks and assassinating rivals and collaborators (Akpuru-Aja & Eke, 2010).

More so, the number of deaths in the Iraq resulting from terrorism between 2010 and 2014 showed a decline in the number of deaths following 20011 and a subsequent rise in 2014. 2014, witnessed a shift in tactics toward simpler attacks against non-traditional targets. IS had also shown that attacks against soft targets using unconventional tactics were more likely to be effective than elaborate schemes. Again, IS-directed attacks occurred in 18 of the 33 OECD countries and accounted for three quarters of all deaths. Even though the number of death resulting from terrorism globally reduced in 2017 to 25, 623 people or 22 percent from the peak in 2014, the rate in Iraq continued to increase as the death attributed to IS increased to 48 percent in 2016 (GTI, 2017).

Some critics of the war, particularly within the U.S. military community argued pointedly against the conflation of Iraq and the war on terror, and criticized Bush for losing focus on the more important objective of fighting al-Qaeda. As Marine Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, the Pentagon's former top operations officer, wrote in a 2006 *Time* article, "I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat—al-Qaeda" ( White House, 2006).

Besides arguing that Iraq was not the top strategic priority in the war on terror, critics of the war also suggested that it could potentially destabilize the surrounding region. Prominent among such critics was Brent Scowcroft, who served as National Security Advisor to George H. W. Bush. In a 15 August, 2002 *Wall Street Journal* editorial, entitled "Don't attack Saddam", Scowcroft wrote that, "Possibly the most dire consequences would be the effect in the region ... there would be an explosion of outrage against us ... the results could well destabilize Arab regimes", and, "could even swell the ranks of the terrorists" (Wall Street Journal, 2002, p.24; Welna, 2014). It was not surprising that over 150 jihadist network organizations had established branches in Iraq (Ugwulebo, 2017).

Americans also become perilously unsafe. Each month, there were more suicide terrorists trying to kill Americans and their allies in Iraq and in other countries than in all the years before 2003 combined. From 1980 to 2003 for instance, there were 343 suicide attacks around the world, and at most 10 percent were anti-American inspired. Since 2004, there had been more than 2,000, over 91 percent against U.S. and the allied forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries (Pape, 2010).

**US Economic Interests and Counter-Terrorism War**

The role of US Oil companies in Iraq was the index used to measure US' economic interests in Iraq. The obvious materialist explanation for the war is oil. It has seriously been argued that the underlying motive for the U.S. invasion of first, Afghanistan after 9/11 and later, Iraq was to advance its economic interest in the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, of which Iraq was a major target. The U.S. did not invade Afghanistan for its possession of oil and gas deposits. Rather, Afghanistan was a strategic place in the U.S' plans to secure greater control of the vast but landlocked oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Sea and Middle East region (Okwara, 2014).

As such, the objective of the U.S' continued presence in Iraq dovetailed with Washington's so-called *New Silk Road policy,* first announced by the then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, was to sharply increase US economic, trade and political power in strategic Middle East, to strengthen US global hegemony and to impede Iraq's development into a sub-regional power (Smith, 2014). It was obvious that any nation who had energy interest in Middle East needed stability in Iraq. And to achieve that stability in the views of the US government, the Baatist government in power in Iraq then, needed to be removed. U.S' long term dream came close to being a reality when it strategically concluded that one of the main sponsors of Osama Bin Laden was Saddam Hussein and it then initiated a manhunt for Osama bin Laden and saw a reason to fight and remove the Taliban government in Kabul, after which it proceeded to Iraq to invade and wage a war against the Baathist regime and later, IS.

US stepped back from its avowed promise of exterminating terrorism when it realized that the staggering cost of the war on terror far outweighed the benefits. Neta Crawford of Brown University estimated the cost of the war (money spent to procure weapons so far and for future veterans' welfare) as a whooping $5 trillion. With reference to the cost-benefit analysis of the war, the US arranged for a withdrawal of its troops from Iraq in 2011, a time when it was not sure it had won the war.

The argument that oil was not decisive so flies in the face of common sense, that, the burden of proof laid on those who denied it. It also begs the question as to why the country sitting atop the world's second largest oil reserves and which posed no threat to the US should be targeted while North Korea, whose nuclear capabilities were real and not hypothetical, but did not possess oil, was spared. Famously, Wolfowitz attributed the difference to the fact that Iraq was 'swimming' in oil.

No doubt many factors are involved - some strategic, some political, and some economic. But it is hard to believe that US leaders would contemplate such an extreme act without very powerful motives - and the pursuit of oil has long constituted the most commanding motive for US military action in the Persian Gulf region.

Again, when Iraq divided up its oil pie in 2009, the Russian company, Lukoil won a slice equivalent to about 10 percent of Iraq's known reserves (Kramer, 2011). It was part of a trend: Five of the six major fields, together representing several million barrels per day of potential output, went to European, Russian and Asian oil companies. It looked as though not much was going to companies from the United States, the country that took the leading role in the war. But a detailed examination of those contracts revealed that American companies were now poised to benefit handsomely as the oil business picked up in Iraq. The oil services companies, Halliburton, Baker Hughes, Weatherford International and Schlumberger had already won lucrative drilling subcontracts and are likely to bid on many more in Iraq, one of the world's richest markets for companies that drill oil wells (Kramer, 2011).

Halliburton and Baker Hughes are American companies, while Schlumberger is based in Paris, though; its drilling subdivision is headquartered in Houston, USA. Weatherford, though founded in Texas, is now incorporated in Switzerland. "Iraq is a huge opportunity for contractors," Alex Munton, a Middle East analyst for Wood Mackenzie, a research and consulting firm based in Edinburgh, told New York Times. "There will be an enormous scale of investment." Mr. Munton estimated roughly half of the expected $150 billion the international majors will spend in capital outlays at Iraqi oil fields over the next decade will go to drilling subcontractors, most of them American. The vested economic interest on Iraq greatly affected US' choice of a diplomatic strategy that would have ensured a quicker extermination of hostilities and a drastic reduction in the number of terrorist cells and full blown organizations.

Hans Blix, the chief UN Inspector then, termed President Bush's misadventure against Iraq as pre-planned and pre-meditated move disguised under Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) charge (Walter, 2003). Paul Rogers, a Professor at the University of Bradford in UK stated that whatever might have been presented to the public, the primary focus of United States' policy on Iraq was well understood in Washington, and that the main focus was oil. "…the immediate U.S. purpose is to destroy the Saddam regime, the search for military and oil security is impelling a broader US agenda for regional control. This ensures further violence in the long term" (Rogers, 2003).

**Reconciliation and Amnesty as Panacea for Peace in Iraq**

As the war progressed from initial invasion in 2003 to a decade long occupation and bombardment, with its attendant losses in human and material resources, the American public opinion favoured a withdrawal from the war. An opinion poll conducted in the second quarter of 2007 in the United States showed that 55% of Americans believed that the war was a mistake while 51% of registered voters supported the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Accordingly, a supplementary spending bill for Iraq that set a deadline for the withdrawal of US troops, passed by the US congress in 2007 was vetoed by President Bush, citing his concern about setting a withdrawal deadline. But another bill, US – Iraq status of Forces Agreement later received the President's accent in 2008, which included a deadline of December, 31 2011, as the date when all US soldiers would have been withdrawn from all Iraqi territory. However, by 2014, IS had gained a lot of grounds, advancing from Western Iraq, prompting the US return to Iraq. By 2017, about 3500 US troops had returned to Iraq.

Furthermore, a national reconciliation between Iraq's warring factions initiated by the Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki to address the ethno-religious conflagration was believed to be a precursor to stemming the country's sectarian violence. Hussein's trial and execution initially billed as an exercise in reconciliation and peace building effort ended up inflaming sectarian tensions and hostilities. The warring factions in Iraq had been deadlocked over the sharing of oil revenues, issues of federalism and ethnic makeup of the government. Maliki's cabinet was still seen as puppets of Tehran (Beehner, 2007).

The Prime Minister set up a national reconciliation plan in 2017 which included an offer of amnesty to insurgents not guilty of targeting civilians; a reversal of de-Baathification law that barred low ranking former Baathists from reentering public life; a national reconciliation that included all Iraq's warring parties and a promise to purge key ministries officials affiliated with Shiite militias. Although, a few of the plan's components – de Baathification, amnesty and conference were partially implemented, nothing substantial was actually realized from the programmes. IS felt dissatisfied with the programmes and continued its rampage

**Summary**

The US, in a bid to fight international terrorism invaded Iraq and its President, Saddam Hussein, believed to have sponsored the leader of al-Qaeda network, Osama bin Laden, to attack the US in September 11, 2001.

However, there was no scientific proof of Iraq's support for al-Qaeda and terrorism; rather, economic interest was the prime and undeniable factor at the root of the invasion of Iraq, hidden under the cloak of counter terrorism war.

The securitization theory revealed that the underlying principle of the US defence policy was the use of hard security (war) to further its political and economic interests, irrespective of the attendant consequences of applying such a theory. Very recent literatures on the subject by Authors as Morgenthau, Young, Akpuru-aja, Nnoli, Kerr, Fukuyama, among others had been

reviewed from where it was determined that: The US invasion of Iraq on grounds of terrorism, rather than eliminating terrorism in Iraq increased the scourge of insurgency, criminality and general insecurity of lives and property in that country.

**Conclusion**

Although the US has always faced terrorism attacks, that of 9/11, 2001 was quite unprecedented in the history of terrorism in the U.S. The incident shook American and their families to their marrows and thought the entire world that nobody was safe after all. Though 9/11 attack was not the beginning of global terror, it was the beginning of world's concerted response to the menace of terrorism.

America adopted a counter-terrorism strategy that befitted its highly priced military capability, uncompromising foreign policy and imperialistic national interest. It downplayed diplomacy, international cooperation and constructive engagement, adopting economic sanctions, and the use of military force or hard security to respond to the 9/11 attack, a strategy that had generated more interest in suicide attacks against the west from Islamic fundamentalists.

Terrorism constituted a global security threat. It is a major challenge to world peace. However, the application of hard security to stem terrorism was tantamount to using 'terrorism' to fight terrorism. Combating terrorism required extensive dialogue, peace initiative and non-military measures and the attainment of world peace depends largely on how well nations collaborate to tackle the challenge of terrorism.

**Recommendations**

From the findings of the research, the following recommendations were made

1. The United States should review its counter-terrorism strategy and adopt negotiations and mediation rather than armed confrontation to counter international terrorism. This will entail engaging the governments of those nations where terrorists use as hide-outs and collaborating with them by extending the *carrot* rather than the *stick* in order to encourage or persuade them to help fish out the terrorists and probably hand them over to the US for prosecution and punishment.
2. America and the European Union should demilitarize Iraq by completely withdrawing their troops from that country. They should close maximum detention camps as Abu Ghrib, Bucca, Maghrib and Guantanamo bay, which are inhuman maximum detention facilities used by US forces to torture terrorist suspects.
3. The UN should try as much as possible to minimize US' influence on the Iraqi economy by placing restrictions against US investors going to Iraq to invest. It should rather provide more aid facilities to Iraq and encourage local content in the management of its natural resources.
4. A round table dialogue to be midwife by China, Japan, and Germany should be organized by the UN to summon all stake holders in the war and appeal for an end to hostilities

while ensuring the institutionalization of a home-grown popular government that is devoid of the manipulation of the US.

5. Iraq should focus on improving infrastructure, healthcare and education in order to reduce high rate of poverty, unemployment, disease and death of civilians.

6. Attempts at reconciliation should embrace all the warring factions in Iraq – all jihadist organizations including but not limited to IS and AQ and a genuine programme of amnesty that should be encompassing and focused on militants and fighters who genuinely wish to surrender their arms and embrace the amnesty.

## References

Akpuru-Aja, A. & Eke, O., (2010). Political economy of the allied war in Iraq and the Israeli Connection, 1991 – 2003. *International Journal of Political Economy*. 1(1), .63-84

Beehner, L. (2007). Impediments to national reconciliation in Iraq. Council on foreign relations. (https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/impediments-national-reconciliation-iraq.  Retrieved 2/5/2017)

Calvani, S. (2008). Transnational organized crime: A global concern. Retrieved July 20, 2017, from United Nations Crime and Justice Research Institute *(www.unicri.it/wwa/staff/speeches/080519b_dri.pdf)*.

Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015 Report *(*https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257514.htm Retrieved 12/3/2017)

Conte, A. (2010). The nature and definition of terrorism. [Online] Available: *(http//www.link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-642-11608-72)*.

Estes. K. (2011). The Second Gulf War (1990 – 1991). Council on Foreign Relations, cfr.org. Retrieved 17/2/1017

FBI, "Definitions of Terrorism in the U.S. Code". [Online] Available: *(http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/terrorism/terrorism-definition)*.

Fukuyama, F., (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. New York: Avon Books.

Gani, M., & Mathew, P. (2008). *Fresh perspectives on the 'War on Terror'* (July 1). ANU College of Law Research *Paper,* 8-40.

Geltzer, J., (2011). US Counter-terrorism strategy and Al-Qaeda: Signaling and the terrorist world view. Routledge c83. Retrieved 22/7/2017

Horst, C. & Van Hear, N., (2002) Counting the cost: Refugees remittance and the war against terrorism. University of Oxford. *Forced Migration Review* (14), 32-54

(https://www.brookings.edu/articles/iraq-and-the-global-war-on-terrorism/)

Kerr, G., (2016). *A short history of the Middle East: From ancient empires to Islamic State.* Harpenden, Herts; Pocket Essentials, an affiliate of Oldcastle books ltd

Khan, A., (1987). A legal theory of International terrorism, Connecticut Law Review, 19 (2), 945 -960.

Kramer, A. (2011, June, 14). U.S companies get slice of Iraq's oil pie. *The New York Times*.

Lin, L., (2011). State-centric security and its limitations: The case of transnational organized crime. *Research Institute for European and American Studies* (RIEAS). Athens, Greece: Nov, 2011. No.156.

Lin, J., (2017). *Rubio says U.S. can't defeat ISIS until Syria's Assad is removed*. Retrieved from (http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/rubio-us-defeat-isis-syrias-assad *removed/story?id=46677615)*

Livesey, B. (2005). Special Report – The Salafist Movement: Al-Qaeda's New Front PBS Frontline. West Educational Foundation. Retrieved 2/ 5/2018.

Mathew, J., (2009). The impact of 9/11 on politics and war: The day the changed everything? Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, Palgrave; MacMillan. p. 232

Mecalla, N., (2006). Aspects and problems of preventing terrorist acts. *Journal "Legal Studies"* No.2, Tirana.

Moghadam, A., (2008). The globalization of Martyrdom: Al-Qaeda, Salafi Jihad and the diffusion of Jihad attacks. John Hopkins University. p.48. Retrieved 28/5/2017

Moore, J., (2014). World Trade Center Reopens as Tallest Building in America. International business Times. Retrieved 16/4/2017

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (2004). *9/11 Commission final report.*

Nwangwu, C., (2014). The counter-terrorism operations of Amisom-Snaf and control of humanitarian crisis in Somalia. *Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy (JIRAD)* .1(1&2), 74-89

Nnoli, O. (2006). *National security in Africa: A radical new perspective*. Enugu: PACREP

Obikeze, D., (2013). *Methods of data analysis in the social and behavioral sciences*. Nsukka, Nigeria: Christian Education Services

Oguonu, C., & Anugwom, E. (2014). *Principle of research in social sciences.* Aba, Nigeria: Brighting Books Ltd

Okwara, E. (2014). The strategic assessment of the United States' war on terrorism. *Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy (JIRAD)* 1(1&2), 99 - 108.

Pape, R. (2010). It's the occupation, stupid: Extensive research into the causes of suicide terrorism proves Islam isn't to blame – the root of the problem is foreign military occupation. *Foreign Policy (FP) (http://cpostdata.uchicago.edu/pdf/ForeignPolicyOccupa tion10182010.pdf).* Retrieved 4/7/2018

Rogers, P. (2003). The myth of a clean war and its real motive. *Internet* article, 13.3.

Selmani, B., (2005). *Special jurisdictions in the field of terrorism. Albania-Macedonia Comparative Study.* Master Thesis. Tirana: Department of Criminal Law, Faculty of Law, University of Tirana.

Slater, O. & Stohl, M., (1988). Current perspectives on international terrorism. Macmillan Press: London

Stern, J. (2003). The protean enemy. *Foreign Affairs,* 82 (4) 27- 44.

Schmid, A. (2011). *The definition of terrorism.* The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research. Routledge. ISBN 978-0-203-82873-1.

Smith, A., (2014). One world trade center opens today. CNN. Retrieved 11/12/2017

UN, (2011), Charter of the United Nations", United Nations Publications, New York.

Ugwulebo, E., (2017). *Time to Amend the Bible & the Koran.* Owerri, Cel-Bez Publishing Co. Ltd

Unanka, G. (2008). *Data analysis: Investigating the political and social world.* Owerri: Nation-Wide Printing and Publishing Ltd.

U.S. Department of States. [Available] *(https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239410.htm).*

Walter, P., (2003, April, 13). Top Iraqi scientist surrenders to U.S. *Washington Post,* Sunday. A25

Weiss, M. & Hassan, H. (2015). *ISIS: Inside the army of terror.* New York: Regan Arts.

Welna, D., (2014). What, exactly are the US interests in Iraq's turmoil? (https://www.npr.org/2014/06/17/323031075/exactly-what-could-or-should-the-u-s-achieve-in-iraq. Retrieved 2/2/2018)

Young, R., (2006). *Defining terrorism: The evolution of terrorism as a legal concept in international law and its influence on definitions in domestic legislation.* (Online) Available: (http://ww.lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/iclr/vol29/iss1/3).

Zeleny, J., & Rutenberg, J., (2011, May 2). Obama finds praise, even from republicans. *The New York Times.*